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Birds of a feather flock at new aviary



GREG FURFINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Can you identify this bird? It's pictured inside the open-air, walk-through aviary Wings of the World, which had a soft opening on the weekend at the Niagara Regional Exhibition grounds in Welland. See story on Page 10.



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Niagara thrust into world spotlight

MARYANNE FIRTH Postmedia Network

The nation's birthday isn't the only July event expected to evoke Canadian pride.

When the Pan Am Games reach Welland and St. Catharines July 11, it's believed patriotism will be at an all-time high.

For Bill Schenck, the only thing better than watching some of Canada's top athletes win gold on Canadian soil is watching them win in his own backyard.

The Henley commissioner has fingers crossed that medals are in the future of the national rowing team when competition gets underway at the Royal Canadian Henley Rowing Course in St. Catharines next Saturday.

Schenck got his first taste of the international stage in 1989, when the Garden City played host to the World Rowing Championships.

"It was my first opportunity to see the Canadian national team compete on home soil," he recalled, adding there was an immense amount of pride in having it happen locally.

"It's an experience he's looking forward to reliving — one he hopes people understand the magnitude of."

Schenck admitted there "has been some negativity" leading up to the games, with concerns about traffic flow and commuter issues rising.

"There's a well-organized parking plan," he said, adding people shouldn't fear potential traffic.

"We've got a game plan that's going to work. Don't worry, just get out and be a part of the event."

What people need to remember, Schenck said, is

this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance "to see some of the best athletes Canada, and the world, has to offer competing here."

"These events just don't happen that often," Schenck encouraged them to instead take in another sport — canoe/kayak sprint in Welland, soccer in Hamilton or various Toronto competitions — "to get out and be a part of the experience."

"Don't miss out." The games will leave behind a legacy — and not just in the infrastructure upgrades seen at Henley Island, Schenck said.

The rowing centre recently received \$250,000 in federal funding to revamp the entrance and the spectator grandstands, including replacement of asphalt sidewalks with cobblestone walkways and new landscaping. That money is in addition to more than \$714,000 in federal funds and \$364,000 chipped in by St. Catharines for renovations for Pan Am.

Not only has the games understood the facility will be "kept up to world-class standards," Schenck said it has also helped to bring in a new roster of volunteers, attracted interest to the sport and secured the city a spot in history as a host venue.

It's a place in history Welland is also proud to hold, as indicated by the many events held to welcome the games to town.

Crews have been working feverishly to get the course at the Welland Pan Am Flatwater Centre ready

TEMPORARY CHANGES IN WELLAND

Canal Bank St. will be closed from Townline Tunnel Rd./Humberstone Rd. to Ontario Rd. until July 14 at 6 p.m.

The Port Colborne Link will be diverted during this period. Contact Welland Transit for more information.

No stopping will be permitted on Townline Tunnel Rd. between Colborne St. and the tunnel entrance.

Signal timing change at the intersection of East Main St. and Farr Rd. may result in longer than normal wait times at traffic lights.

Heavier traffic volumes are expected July 11 to 14.

Increased traffic will likely occur between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and again from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the following roads:

Prince Charles Dr., from West Main St. to Humberstone Rd.; Hwy. 140, from Humberstone Rd. to East Main St.; Humberstone Rd. from Hwy. 140 to Prince Charles Dr.; and Main St. from Hwy. 406 to Prince Charles Dr.

for canoe/kayak teams from across the globe.

"We're getting the course prepared, making sure it's up to international standards," Welland Recreational Canal Corp. executive director Stephen Fischer said.

"We've been at it working hard since June 15."

Final details were being completed at the course Thursday, preparing for

training among visiting countries, which is expected to get underway Monday.

"The waterway is ready," Fischer said.

And so, it seems, are the people.

"I've been receiving calls every day from people asking about tickets, parking and buses," said Cassandra Magazzeni, Welland's Pan Am Games co-ordinator.

Welland's first block of tickets sold out and have yet to be replenished by Pan Am organizers Toronto 2015.

Calls have also been flooding in from would-be spectators wondering if they'll be able to sit on the east bank of the canal to watch the competitions, but Magazzeni said with fencing in place and the road closed it will not be possible.

"People are really looking forward to it. There have been a lot of questions about biking in the area. People are going to be exploring Niagara."

Magazzeni is hopeful residents will take advantage of the unique experience that will leave Welland with "an amazing venue" to host a wealth of future events, including the World Dragon Boat Championships Aug. 19 to 23.

The city's economic development manager, Dan Degazio, suspects the city will be left with more than just its state-of-the-art \$10-million facility.

"This is our investment tool for the next three to five years," he said of the Pan Am Games, which he's hopeful will be a launching pad to bring industry to Niagara.

"We're expecting it to be big, for it to be good for us with for opportunities for investment," he said.

Niagara Region, in part-

WELLAND PAN AM GAMES NEED-TO-KNOW INFO

Dates: July 11 to 14

Number of athletes: 120

Time Gates open each day at 7 a.m. Two hours before competition starts

Where: Welland Pan Am Flatwater Centre

nership with the two host cities, as well as Hamilton, is setting up networking opportunities with people who've "travelled hundreds of thousands of miles" to experience the games and show support, Degazio said.

"They're in our backyard. We need to use that to our advantage."

Degazio said potential investment begins with "that first little bit of a relationship" that can hopefully be developed with time.

That initial introduction will take place through the Americas Investment Playbook, an initiative created by the participating communities to showcase to potential investors visiting from around the globe what Hamilton and Niagara have to offer.

The project includes tours running July 14 to 23 that highlight local manufacturing, food and agriculture, digital media and information communications technology sectors.

Long-term relationships begin with good first impressions, said Paul Connor, Niagara's manager of economic research and analysis.

The Region's teams, he added, are ready to impress. "We want them to remem-

ber us," Connor said, adding the hope is to stay in touch with these business contacts in hopes of securing investment in the future.

"People will have to 'stay tuned,' he said, to determine the true economic impact had by the games in town.

It has been more than a year-long process to create the playbook and help develop the itineraries, said Brian York, manager of economic development for St. Catharines.

"You have to look at this as a legacy to the community and ask 'What other people can we touch with that? What else is there to do in the city?'"

Followup calls will take place after the games to "continue the dialogue" between the communities and potential investors, he said.

"You have to try and capitalize on international events when the chance presents itself."

The community, York said, "can't look any better for the games," and he's confident that will help to draw interest.

"We're prepping for an open house for an international audience."

Degazio acknowledged there have been concerns about the costs associated with bringing the games to Welland — a figure that has yet to be solidified in total.

"But it's part of the cost of doing business," he said, adding it's sometimes required to spend money to make money.

"The games are going to pay dividends for us for a long time. People will remember this place."

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LOCAL NEWS

POLICING



GRANT LAFLECHE/POSTMEDIA NETWORK
Mental health worker Lindsay Galipeau, left, and Acting Sgt. David Bozz will patrol St. Catharines and Thorold together.

Mental health workers on patrol

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

To hear Lindsay Galipeau talk about it, riding shotgun with a police officer three nights a week is just another day at the office.

True she has to wear a bullet-proof vest. And she had to take up of force training, which included what to do should her police partner be incapacitated during a call.

But the mental health and addictions worker with the Canadian Mental Health Association isn't focused on the potential dangers. The possibility of helping those in need eclipses any other consideration.

"Having the ability to go out there and help people in crisis and being a person who wants everyone to live as fulfilling and healthy a life as they can, is what really makes this exciting for me," said Galipeau.

On a recent Thursday night she rode with Niagara Regional Police Acting Sgt. Dave Bozza on the first shift partnering an officer in St. Catharines with a mental health worker. Several of her colleagues joined other officers on a rotation, ensuring at least one mental health worker is on duty each night with police.

The project is a partnership between the police, local hospitals and the CMHA, said NRP Chief Jeff McGuire. The mental health worker is paid by the province.

McGuire said he had been anxious to get the project up and running because of the success seen in other jurisdictions, including Hamilton.

When police encounter someone suffering from a mental health issue, their

options are fairly limited, he said. Typically, the person is taken into custody and either brought to a hospital — where officers can wait for hours while the person is checked in at an emergency room — or placed them in a jail cell.

"And that is often not the right place for them," McGuire said. Having a mental health worker working beside an officer provides more options, he said.

In Hamilton, it resulted in an 85% reduction in the time officers spend waiting at a hospital, and a 40% reduction in the number of people brought by police to a hospital, McGuire said.

Galipeau said when she and Bozza are dispatched to a call, she will do an on-site mental health screening of the person in question. Among other factors she will look at the person's appearance — are they disheveled or dressed appropriately for the weather — if they are suffering from any delusions or hallucinations or if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Based on her recommendation, Bozza may take the person to an appropriate mental health organization or shelter. There is some wait time at these organizations, Galipeau said, but it is significantly shorter than at a hospital.

McGuire said mental health workers will be riding with officers in St. Catharines and Thorold from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m., seven days a week. Dispatchers will know which car has a mental health worker in it, and will send that car to the appropriate calls.

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MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Region staff directed to freeze taxes

ROB HOULE

Postmedia Network

Niagara Region staffers have their marching orders — work towards a budget that will see no hike in property taxes.

Shortly after hearing from two businessmen who added their voices to a call for a 0% tax hike, regional councillors reiterated a stance they took at last week's budget review committee of the whole meeting and directed staff to aim for no hike in the Region's portion of the property tax bill.

"This is guidance," regional Chair Alan Cassin said following last Thursday night's council meeting, "so I can't predict what staff will come back with in the fall, but in terms of what we accept, it would be difficult to promote anything except zero."

Earlier, businessmen Tim Parker, the general manager of Ripley's Niagara, and Kevin Grealy, the owner of Clockwork Systems, echoed the calls from other business leaders who called on the region to take a stand against spending and rising property

taxes, during a roundtable discussion with Cassin and budget chair David Barrick of Port Colborne and audit committee chair Tony Quick early the previous week.

"The last five years have been very difficult when it comes to our business model and our plan due to the fact we have rising costs all over the map," said Parker, who noted he was representing the Jim Pattison Group, which in addition to owning Ripley's Believe it or Not on Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls, also owns Great Wolf Lodge. While he cited the increased cost of salaries because of hikes in minimum wage and "out of control" hydro rates as stressors on business, he said he was before council "because it could affect change."

"Next year's budget at a 0% increase would be the absolute best thing for us — it would be one more lifeline to get us through for another year," Parker said.

Parker's call for a 0% budget increase could result in an actual reduction in property taxes should a forecast 1% hike in assessment be attained.

Grealy said as a small business owner from Niagara Falls, he struggles against mounting taxes.

"All I can do is plead with you, when you look at the next budget, to seriously think about the small business owners and the strength that they bring to the region," Grealy said to councillors. "We've heard a lot in the past several months, with the new group here, about being business friendly and wanting to generate business opportunities in Niagara, and the only way you're going to do that is to help us meet then financial pressures that we have to meet every day."

While supportive of a 0% tax hike, Lincoln Coun. Bill Hodgson said to achieve it will require much work.

"Zero is very difficult, when you consider the responsibilities we have," Hodgson said. "At a time when we are talking about the pursuit of zero, we will be scouring for any type of saving. We'll have to find a great deal of savings to be able to absorb the inflationary pressures that we're going to experience."

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Community centre design paused and twin-pad now recommended

DAVE AUGUSTYN
For Pelham News

In April I provided you with a timeline for the design and possible construction of a new multi-faceted community centre in the East Fonthill area.

Town council recently paused that process to get more information.

You will recall that, based on a resident survey, a detailed business case analysis and a comparison to industry standards, council confirmed that sustaining demand for a multi-faceted community centre containing a single-pad arena (with a potential second-pad after 2023), a fitness centre, walking / running indoor track, multi-purpose space, and gymnasium sports uses existed in 2014.

So, council appointed a citizen/user-based

architectural design advisory committee (ADAC) in August 2014 to help design this type of facility.

In February 2015, council agreed with ADAC's recommendations of adding a large multi-purpose performing arts space, an atrium shared public space, and 1,200-plus spectator arena seats.

Council also agreed with ADAC's later recommendations to re-evaluate the business case for building a twin-pad arena during the initial build (instead of after 2023), and to tender the operation of the potential centre to the private sector.

After presenting a draft schematic design to ADAC and council in the winter, the architect worked with individual users via specialized consultations this spring. On June 18, ADAC approved the architect's revised schematic design in principal.

On June 23, council also approved this design in principal, but paused further work by the architect until town staff provided a high-level costing evaluation of the design and until ADAC met to review the plan again.

Concerned with the project's affordability, council also met on June 23 and directed staff to provide additional information to help determine potential capital and operating costs for the revised design, including: fund-raising potential; grant potential from other governments; estimated operating revenue; any benefit of increased assessment; results of twin-pad business case re-evaluation; and, response to the tender for potential private-sector operation. Town staff expects to present this information to council over the summer.

Finally, council received the first report on

Monday — the re-evaluated business case for a potential twin-pad arena. LeisurePlan updated its 2013 projections by considering missing information and an additional demand from existing arena ice users (13 to 15 hours a week) and from the Pelham Panthers Junior B Team (five hours a week). It concluded that "a second ice pad would be utilized 69% to 77% during prime time" and therefore recommended that the town "should consider the provision of a second ice pad by 2018-19."

I will continue to keep you informed about progress of the potential multi-purpose community centre.

Check out links for documents and past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com. You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca with questions or to suggest future topics.

Former Chios reached scrap yard only to sink in storm

SKIP GILLMAN
For Postmedia Network



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Chios is pictured at the Iroquois Lock in this undated Lawrence Scott photo from the collection of Brockville Museum.

After a generally productive 36-year career on the high seas, the former Greek and then Liberian freighter *Chios* was sold for scrap.

It arrived at Aliaga, Turkey, on Dec. 4, 1986, but broke loose in a storm on Dec. 26, and foundered.

Thirty years earlier, in June 1956, this ship was completed at Bremen, West Germany, as *Chios*. It was originally registered in Greece but, by the time it came through the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1965, it was flying the flag of Liberia on the stern.

The 159-metre-long-by-17.2-metre-wide freighter had five holds and five hatches and able to carry more than 15,000 tonnes of cargo.

Chios was sold and renamed *Lueris* in 1972. Registry moved back to Greece and, under this name, it was not a seaway trader. It spent another decade in service before tying up at Lefkas, Greece, on Feb. 8, 1982. With no further business, the ship remained idle until finally being sold for scrap. It was towed to the Aliaga scrapyard and then sank in a storm.

■ **NIAGARA REGION:** Councillors opt to put St. Catharines building on hold

Welland getting new POA courthouse

ROB HOULE
Postmedia Network

Welland is getting a new courthouse.

Niagara Region councillors at their last Thursday night meeting endorsed a staff recommendation that calls for the construction of a new provincial offences courthouse on Duncan St. in Welland.

Including the purchase of land, the pricetag for the build is estimated at \$12.4 million. In voting to support the staff recommendation, which was supported by the corporate services committee on June 3, council also agreed to put the future of a planned new

courthouse in St. Catharines on hold.

The previous term of regional council gave the green light to the build of the POA courthouses to replace rented spaces in Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines, but recent machinations by the provincial government would see some Provincial Offences Act charges dealt with online call into question the need for Niagara to have two POA courthouses.

Last Thursday, councillors agreed with staff to begin construction, post haste, and the cheaper of the two builds. A new St. Catharines courthouses is estimated to cost

\$14.3 million.

There was no debate on the issue last Thursday, as Welland Mayor Frank Campion immediately after introducing the staff report and the recommendations within, asked that the question of support be put to a vote without discussion. Council voted 21-7 to support staff and the decision made at the corporate services committee meeting.

Outside council chambers, Campion said he did not expect his motion to not have debate would pass.

"To be quite honest, when I stood up to make that motion, I really wasn't expecting to end debate, I just threw it out on the chance it might fly. It was just one of those things that was unplanned," Campion said, adding he felt the issue has had sufficient debate.

Campion said his view that Welland is the best site for Niagara's lone POA courthouse, should that be the ultimate decision, is based on fact, not parochialism. The staff recommendation of a new courthouse in

Welland, he said, "is logical, fiscally responsible. It is the best solution based on the facts."

St. Catharines Coun. Bruce Timms said following the council meeting he was not happy with the decision.

Timms said he favours holding off on any decision of new courthouse construction until after it is made clear on the need following the implementation of the province's online program to deal with certain POA matters.

"Several St. Catharines councillors defended the

need for effective delivery of justice through two courts, parallel to the provincial two court system for Niagara," Timms said. "That there should be a court in St. Catharines and a court in Welland."

Timms said he believes, regardless of a decrease in court time as a result of the online resolution system, that there should be POA courts in both cities, albeit scaled back designs.

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■ BAD IDEAS

Gun-shaped phone protector could leave you dead

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

This case to protect your cell-phone could leave you dead.

At the least, it could summon an armed response from police.

In recent days across North America, images of the hard phone cases that includes what either resembles the butt of a semi-automatic pistol or a revolver have

been making the rounds on Facebook and Twitter, and arresting headlines have ensued.

"We are aware they are being sold online," said Const. David Mander, a spokesman for Niagara Regional Police, after being e-mailed images of the product.

One picture showed the butt of the gun protruding from a back pocket, implying it was a firearm. Mander said there have been

no reports of any gun-shaped cell-phone cases being sold or seen in the Niagara region.

"If anyone possesses one, they should use caution, if seen by the public it may cause alarm and trigger a police response," he said.

One gun-shaped item was selling for \$10.99 US Saturday on eBay — to which people have demanded similar products be pulled from its listings.

Based on reader feedback supplied to the Tribune's Facebook page, where the newspaper posted pictures of the novelty item, the consensus seemed to be: don't buy this product.

The following is a selection of comments left by readers:

"Using something like this is just asking for trouble." — Kimberly Anne Robillard

"This is going to get someone killed." — Christopher Eric Lagesten

"Wonder how many people are going to get shot using this? What a thoughtless idea." — Debbie Marko

"If people are being shot for toy coloured guns then what's going to happen with this?" — Meagan Lecompte

"What is this world coming to? Why would someone come up with such a stupid idea?" — Pat Koning

"With all the issues surrounding national security and mass shootings, I'm really surprised this would even be legal, not to mention that it's not user-friendly at all. Ridiculous!" — Rob Janzen

"Not only will it cause confusion with police but it could cause innumerable issues while being out in public places ... The company that made these need a serious kick in the head ... this was one idea that should have been tossed into the 'stupid idea' pile." — Tamara Trepied

"The cops don't have time to see its your phone and not a gun. Bang, you're dead!" — Rob Wells

"I want one!" — Aaron Robbins Butti-ging

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- 9:30 p.m. Lighting of Gas Lamp (sponsored by Young Professionals & Chamber of Trade)
- 9:45 p.m. Up Front (until midnight)

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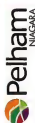
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Please be advised the Monday, July 13, 2015 Public Meeting for a Zoning By-Law Amendment has been postponed. Thank you for your co-operation and we apologize for any inconvenience.



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■ HEALTH CARE

South Niagara wants on Ontario physician needs list

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne is demanding a place on the province's list of areas of high physician need.

That's because the city's health services co-ordinator, Joanne Ferraccioli, is concerned that not making it on the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care list will hamper physician recruitment efforts.

"We don't believe that to be appropriate or equitable, especially with so many changes going on in the hospital improvement plan process," Ferraccioli said. "We want those restrictions removed."

In Niagara, only St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake were included on the list of high-need areas, released in May.

Communities included on the list will be eligible for physician recruitment incentives such as an income stabilization program, and limited

recruitment to family health organizations.

In an e-mail, MOH spokesperson Shannon Zimmerman said the list of communities with a high physician need was developed as part of the Ten Point Plan for Saving and Improving Service announced by Minister of Health Dr. Eric Hoskins earlier this year.

Zimmerman said areas of high physician need are communities where physician supply does not meet local demand for their services.

She said the ministry used a list of criteria including family physician to population ratio for compiling the list of underserved communities.

But Ferraccioli questions the data used by the province.

"We want to know where they got that data from, because our data shows all of south Niagara — Port Erie, Niagara Falls, Welland, Port Colborne, Wainfleet — the numbers are even worse for physician to population

ratio," Ferraccioli said.

In her report, unanimously supported at Monday's Port Colborne council meeting, Ferraccioli pointed out that Welland and Port Colborne have 46 physicians between them, which represents 16% of total primary care physicians in Niagara. However, the population of the two communities is 20% of the total population of Niagara, "indicating that we have far less physicians per capita as compared to the rest of Niagara," she said.

And physicians working in south Niagara are on average much closer to retirement than physicians working in other communities.

Zimmerman said the province will review its list of high need communities on a quarterly basis, and "all communities will be reconsidered when those numbers take place." Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney said it's essential that the ministry "reverse its decision, and include Welland,

Port Colborne and Wainfleet as areas of high need."

"We have to let the Ministry of Health know that we're out here and we're not happy," Maloney said.

In addition to demanding inclusion in the list of high need communities, Ferraccioli's report also recommended a compensation between Port Colborne, Welland and Wainfleet to develop a clinical services plan to address and enhance primary medical care in the area; and support of Welland's efforts to ensure there is no loss of emergency care services at Welland hospital while ensuring no loss of urgent care services in Port Colborne.

"We will certainly support Welland with respect to ensuring that there's no further loss of emergency care service," Maloney said.

"We want to work with Welland and Wainfleet, but it's essential that we retain urgent care services delivered out of the Port Colborne site."

Welland Mayor Frank Campion said he's "extremely pleased" with the support from Port Colborne.

"We're really looking at it from a south Niagara perspective," Campion said.

He said he met with Maloney and Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs about a month ago to discuss health care.

"We're taking it to the next step... We really want to have a unified front from south Niagara and while we've agreed on things in the past, I think we're officially coming together as a unit that moves forward representing south Niagara and ensuring that the residents of south Niagara have access to quality, equitable health care," Campion said.

Maloney said he and regional Coun. David Barick met with associate health minister Dipika Damerla last week to discuss concerns about the future of both Port Colborne and Welland hospitals.

"We've certainly planted a seed in this regard and we hope that it will bear fruit in the years to come," he said. "A position has been taken by the province and we have to show them that they're wrong. It's far from over."

Though contacted, Niagara Health System representatives did not provide comment on this story.

allan.benner@postmedia.ca

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LOCAL NEWS

JULY 1



PHOTOS BY GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Nothing says "Happy birthday, Canada," like a huge 148th birthday cake served up in Pelham's Harold Black Park.

Pelham celebrates Canada's 148th



Lions Club members flave away for a long lineup at Harold Black Park in Pelham. Featured on the Canada Day menu were, of course,outine and back bacon on a bun.



Entertainment was featured under the big top at Pelham's Harold Black Park on Canada Day.

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

It was a great big party in Harold Black, eh?

Canada Day's cloudy skies kept temperatures down, and mid-afternoon did release their rainy contents for a short downpour. Otherwise, everyone was smiling at Pelham's July 1 celebrations.

Including Pierre Parent, who was joined by wife Susan and their kids, sort of, who they have been bringing to Pelham's Harold Black Park to celebrate Canada Day for years. "Now they're old enough to wander on their own."

Still, that didn't keep Mom and Dad at home.

"We drive," Susan quipped.

"It's a fun day for the whole family," said Pierre.

Joel and Samantha Anderson, too, make Harold Black Park a regular Canada Day outing. They start by walking along the Canada Day Parade as the procession makes its way from Hault St. into park, where the festivities Wednesday were hosted by the local Rotary Club.

One of the big draws is the food served up by the Lions Club.

Said Samantha: "The pieplant on a bun is killer."

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greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca
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■ **WINGS OF THE WORLD:** Walk-through aviary opens on Niagara Regional Exhibition grounds

Exotic birds find a home in Welland

GREG FURMINGER

Postmedia Network

Martin Vaillancourt's life has gone to the birds — and he couldn't be any happier.

"I've had birds my whole life," says the 42-year-old father, recalling how he first started breeding the feathered creatures at the age of seven.

"My bedroom as a kid was a stack of cages.

A pursuit that began with zebra finches grew to an assortment of species by the time he was 15 growing up in Quebec City.

Now he's sharing their beauty with anyone looking for a relaxing moment in the confines of his open-air, walk-through aviary, Wings of the World Bird Park Niagara.

Nestled on the Niagara Regional Exhibition grounds in Welland, the attraction had its

soft opening on the weekend.

Vaillancourt, a St. Ann's resident who teaches science and physical education at a French-Catholic high school in Hamilton, is partnered in the aviary with Mike Gagnon, a native of Bas-Saint-Laurent, Que., who now calls Welland home.

The two became friends about 20 years ago over their love of exotic birds.

Friends of both suggested they

share their collections with a wider audience.

And so, Wings of the World was hatched.

The aviary has 32 varieties of exotic birds, including more than a dozen tropical ducks.

"They're pretty unique. They're not something you find in your local pet store," Vaillancourt says of the larger assortment as a peacock squawks loudly in the distance.

"You can see them on TV, you can Google them up, but to see them like this ..." he says, trailing off with a sense of pride in his accomplishment.

The exotic birds have housed in a 21-metre-long, six-metre-high outdoors enclosure consisting of a large net covering, held up by several posts. Inside is a small pond and forest for the birds to perch.

Visitors — they better have their cameras with them — can enter the enclosure and follow a footpath to different areas.

The birds can be easily seen milling about a pond, or more furtively slipping from water under a canopy of trees.

Visitors to 1,100 Niagara Falls should look high and low and peer through the greenery — Vaillancourt says it needs thinning — to search for the aviary's

inhabitants.

Not just an array of colours, the aviary also hosts an assortment of sounds — some of the loudest coming from southern lapwings that on Sunday seemed to be taunting a pair of statuesque crown cranes, one of which is featured on the aviary logo.

Vaillancourt says he has always been attracted to birds for being "peaceful, beautiful."

"For anyone seeking thrills like a roller coaster, this is not the place," he says.

Park hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., May through October.

Tickets are \$6 for children aged three to 12, \$12 for adults aged 13 to 61, and \$8 for seniors 62 and older. Children three and under are admitted free.

For more information, visit www.wingsoftheworld.com.

greg.furminger@summedia.ca
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GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Martin Vaillancourt is co-owner of the open-air, walk-through aviary Wings of the World, which had a soft opening last weekend at the Niagara Regional Exhibition grounds in Welland.

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■ **NIAGARA REGION:** Station replaces former Merritton base, will serve south St. Catharines, Thorold

New EMS building unveiled

BOB HOULE
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region has unveiled its new \$1.3-million ambulance station.

The new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) station is located on Merrittville Hwy. on Niagara Region headquarters land. At the June 30 ribbon-cutting ceremony, EMS chief Kevin Smith jokingly

apologized to region staffers for the station eating up parking spaces.

The new station will serve Thorold and south St. Catharines. It replaces the EMS station that was located on Walnut St., which was leased, shared space with the St. Catharines Fire Department prior to a new Merritton fire station being built on Harzard Rd.

"Several years ago, we were in a

position to contemplate where we were going to relocate after vacating our previous premises," Smith said. "And we spent a considerable time, a lot of analysis, trying to find strategically just where that best location is, because when we think about deployment, we think first and foremost about response times...and being accessible to those in need."

The new EMS building has room for three ambulances, although only two will be based out of it for the time being, Smith said. It will also house special equipment used to reach patients in off-road locations. It will be staffed 24 hours by a total of 16 staff. It is equipped with a charging station for electric vehicles and its roof is solar-panel ready with conduit installed should the region apply to the province for a micro-fit contract to produce and sell electricity.

Niagara Region Chair Alan Caslin said the 3,470-square foot station speaks to the region's strategic plan as it relates to healthy communities.

"Patient outcome is all about getting the right care at the right time from the right

provider," Caslin said. "This facility is just another one of those mechanisms that facilitates what we are trying to do in that light."

"Thorold Mayor Ted Luciani said the new EMS station is well placed to serve the burgeoning population of the area.

"Thorold's population density in Confederation Heights, its west community, is definitely on the rise," Luciani said. "Just think of the number of people living in the student lodges just east of us right now. Four hundred additional units will be open this September," he said of Brock University student housing along St. David's Rd.

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BOB TYNICZYNSKY/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Visitors tour the facility as Niagara Region cut the ribbon on its new Emergency Medical Services Merritville station on June 30. The building will house three three-truck bays and facilities for staff at the Niagara Region Headquarters property in Thorold.

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Fonthill Rotary hosting golf tourney

Postmedia Network

Charity begins on the first tee for people supporting the Rotary Club of Fonthill's community projects.

Taking part in the service organization's 24th annual fundraising tournament can also put money into a

lucky golfer's pocket. That's because \$10,000 is the hole-in-one prize for the benefit taking place Monday, July 27, at Lookout Point Country Club.

The \$180 registration includes 18 holes of golf, lunch, dinner and the

chance to win prizes.

Dress is "smart casual," which means no denim apparel, pants or shorts with drawstrings and cargo-style pants allowed.

Contact Randy Momot at 905-882-8363 or by e-mail at randy.momot@ca-ga.com

to register a foursome or for more information.

Since the tournament's inception more than \$200,000 has been raised to fund scholarships, women's wellness projects, the Isaac Riehl Memorial Skatepark as well as Pelham Cares.

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■ **HYDRO ELECTRICITY:** Nikola Tesla Day is Friday

Prolific inventor to be honoured

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

As a young boy, Nikola Tesla saw an image of the Horseshoe Falls in a travel book and told his uncle he wanted to put a wheel under the falls to harness the power of the moving water.

A bronze statue of the brilliant inventor has stood guard at the same point where

that photograph was taken since 2006.

The monument shows Tesla in a long overcoat, carrying a top hat in his left hand. In his right hand, he's carrying a cane, depicting the moment he conceived of alternating current by drawing diagrams on the ground.

He's standing atop an AC motor, one of the 700 inventions he patented.

Tesla's most outstanding feat was har-

nessing the power of Niagara Falls for long distance transmission of electricity.

His polyphase system of electrical current was first used in 1896 on the U.S. side of the Niagara River.

In 1905, the same system was used at the Sir Adam Beck generating station in Queenston.

"That's where electrification of the whole world started," said Nemanja Jevremovic, of Kitchen.

Tesla's contributions will be honoured Friday with a ceremony at the monument to mark Nikola Tesla Day.

"It's Tesla's birthday and we're celebrating that and we're commemorating his achievements in Niagara Falls," Jevremovic said.

Organized by the Nikola Tesla School in Niagara Falls, the event will be held at the monument starting at 5 p.m.

The consul general for Serbia as well as the monument's artist, Hamilton's Les Drysdale, will speak at the ceremony.

School principal Boris Zivkovic said staff and students meet at the monument every July 10 to commemorate the birthday of the prolific inventor, electro-technician and

physicist.

The statue was commissioned by Saint George Serbian Church in Niagara Falls. Donors included the Serbian National Shield Society of Canada and the Republic of Serbia.

The motor on the monument is similar to the "Teslaatron" statue in Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort's entrance, which also pays homage to the inventor.

Along with the monument in Niagara Falls, there is a bronze statue of Tesla on Goat Island.

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**MIKE DRATTEVA/
POSTMEDIA NETWORK**
Boris Zivkovic and Nemanja Jevremovic at the monument of Nikola Tesla near the brink of the Horseshoe Falls in Niagara Falls Friday. They will be part of a ceremony at the monument to mark Nikola Tesla Day on July 10.

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■ **MALE REVUE:** Burlesque meets Magic Mike meets Step Up

Handsome International Men headed to Niagara

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

Have you seen HiM?
Well, you can, later this month.
The male revue HiM:Man makes a stop at Club Se7en on Friday.

"We've done a lot in Toronto and we're looking to expand into different cities and Niagara was our first choice," said co-founder Mark Munroe.

HiM, which stands for Handsome International Men, was founded in 2013 by Munroe and Chris Cecile, both models.

Munroe describes the upcoming

Niagara show as "burlesque meets *Magic Mike* meets *Step Up*."

"It's a very dance-based, athletic show," he explained.

With strip clubs and burlesque shows filling the market on the more daring and scandalous side, the pair wanted to create something more accessible but just as exciting for the modern woman.

"It's cheeky but it doesn't cross the line," Munroe said. "They're not strippers."

"It's not just a show, it's an experience," he added.

There will be 12 HiM members at the Niagara Falls performance.

The men of HiM were in Toronto recently to promote the release of *Magic Mike XXL*, the sequel to the film that inspired the creation of HiM.

"It was a huge thrill to be a part of the promotion of *Magic Mike XXL*," Cecile said.

"We wanted to make Channing (Tatum) proud of our HiM men."

For more information on the Niagara Falls show, visit www.himpro-motions.com.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

HiM (Handsome International Men) will perform their first show in Niagara Falls on Friday at Club Se7en.

■ MUSIC

American Bandstand to be revisited at Roselawn

Postmedia Network

Fans of Dick Clark and oldies rock won't want to miss American Bandstand Revisited.

The "rockin' 1950s dance party" comes to Port Colborne's Roselawn Theatre in Port Colborne for two shows this month: Saturday, July 25, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, July 26, at 3 p.m.

The fun-filled musical theatre presentation celebrates the long-running TV program launched with host Clark in 1956. Clark will be portrayed by 91.7 Giant FM DJ Jeff Brown.

American Bandstand Revisited includes live musical performances highlighted by tributes to Ricky Nelson, Del Shannon, Connie Francis, Dion, Paul Anka and Bobby Darin.

Audiences can expect to hear such songs as Hello Mary Lou, Runaway, Lipstick on Your Collar, Runaround Sue, Diana and Spanish Splash.

The show is audience-interactive and features a "Rate the Record" segment to add to the fun.

Tickets are \$29, available by phone at 905-834-7572, or at the theatre box office at 296 Fiedlen Ave., Port Colborne.



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LOCAL NEWS

■ **MUSIC:** Welland/Port Colborne polka and rock band still going strong after all these years

It was the summer of '69 when Nu-Tones debuted

FRANK IJEMAN

Postmedia Network

It's been a wild ride for a Welland/Port Colborne-based band, and its members aren't letting up any time soon.

The polka/rock band the Nu-Tones is looking back on a crazy 46 years this July, and its members are celebrating their ongoing music and friendship.

The six-man band has had several member-swaps, many different singers, but the core of the band has been together for the majority of the 46 years, led by Tony Habjan.

These days, the band comprises Bryon Pull, Tony Habjan, Barry Stickles, Bill Ducharme, Frank Habjan and Erwin Green.

Tony Habjan recalls the first practice. It was July 18, 1969.

The guys were in high school

when they first started playing together — and they were getting a lot of gigs, keeping them busy three to four nights a week.

"Back in the heyday we were making good money," says guitarist Bryon Pull. "I was probably the richest kid in high school."

The band made a name for itself playing many different venues, events and weddings. From Ukrainian new year celebrations to opening for Kim Mitchell at Oktoberfest in Kitchener-Waterloo, the band has made the rounds throughout much of southern Ontario over the years.

The band doesn't play nearly as much as these days — usually taking on seven to eight gigs a year — but the guys still love to entertain crowds and play

the music they love for people to listen and dance to.

Well, most of them love the music.

Saxophonist Barry Stickles remembers the first time he played with the guys, coming from a background of mostly rock music.

"I hated it," Stickles says, "It was awful, just awful."

His bandmates crack up as Stickles explains his disdain for polka music, a feeling that hasn't changed over the past 40 years.

"All these mouldy oldies Elvis songs and all these country songs, you've gotta like music, not THE music," he says.

The group of jokesters continues to laugh and poke fun at each other, while reminiscing on the adventures they had as a young band playing regular



FRANK IJEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

From left: Bryon Pull, Tony Habjan, Barry Stickles, Bill Ducharme, Frank Habjan and Erwin Green make up The Nu-Tones.

sloves.

Stickles says it was that spirit that made him want to play with this band, despite his dislike of the music it played.

"I went home after my first night playing with these guys and I was lying at home with my parents and I told them

these two guys are nuts, you should see them. I couldn't stay away. These guys were making me laugh all the time," he recalls.

These days, the guys are mostly working full-time jobs in various fields, but they still come together a handful of

times each year to perform. With no practices or rehearsals and no music sheets, the band still gets up at shows and plays music by ear.

"That's one thing I was really impressed with when I started with the band," says vocalist Bill Ducharme, the "newest" addition to the Nu-tones, having joined in 1993. He says it blew him away how he could start singing and the band would be able to pick it up and follow along within just a few bars.

The band agrees that a love for music, and a loyalty to the group, is what has kept them together all these years.

The Nu-Tones will be playing at Sausage Festival at Lipa Park in Port Colborne on July 5.

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